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Eve: The Story You Haven't Heard

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Choose Knowledge

This article is the first in a series devoted to Women In the Bible. The first woman in The Bible is Eve. She is often portrayed as the woman who brought sin into the world. This image is largely due to Christian interpretations of the scripture. However, this is not Eve's true story. In fact, Eve is quite the heroine in the Genesis story.

Christianity Has Perverted the Image of Eve

The Christian version of the story, which often gets portrayed in the media, is that Eve disobeys G-d's command to not eat of the tree of knowledge of right and wrong. In doing so, she brings sin into the world.

Judaism Has No Doctrine of Original Sin

However, the Jewish people do not understand the story their people wrote to be a story of original sin entering the world. Rather, in the Jewish narrative this is the story of man's awakening. Indeed, the website **thetorah.com (https://www.thetorah.com/article/the-immortal-myth-of-adam-and-eve)** says:

"The word "sin" doesn't occur in the Hebrew Bible until chapter four. The concept of the devil isn't invented until the first century BCE, 500-700 years after this story was most likely written, and "original sin" is an idea first put forward by Bishop Irenaeus of Gaul in the 2nd century CE.

Instead, this story is a myth about a man created to tend the garden of a divine being, a woman created to be the man's companion, and a talking snake who tempts the woman to eat fruit from a magical Tree of Knowledge, declared off-limits by the Being who created it all. This is a story about a woman disobeying her creator for the purpose of gaining wisdom. She is the protagonist who moves the story – and the subsequent history of humanity – forward. At her instigation, and with the guidance of a serpent, the humans trade a life of ignorance (and potentially immortality) as God's gardeners, for a taste of divine knowledge."

The garden story is seen as a coming-of-age narrative. In this story, Eve chooses knowledge and growth for humankind. She becomes the mother of humanity. Eve is the heroine of the tale. The Christian version perverted Eve's image to make her the bringer of Original Sin. The doctrine of original sin was never the purpose of the story.

Eve Did Not Disobey

A further issue with the Christian version is that it is rather hard to disobey G-d when G-d gave you no instructions. A careful reading of the text confirms G-d never told Eve not to eat of the tree. He told Adam and Adam told Eve. So, Eve did not believe she was disobeying G-d. Eve was not deciding

between believing G-d or the serpent. She was making a choice between believing Adam, a man, or believing the serpent, the most subtle of G-d's creatures. She chose to believe the subtle serpent. Eve disobeyed Adam, not G-d.

Adam Was The One Who Disobeyed G-d

Indeed, it was Adam who disobeyed G-d. Why do we let Adam off the hook so easily? Adam was standing there silently the entire time the serpent was telling Eve to eat from the tree. He never opens his mouth to say, "Eve, remember, we cannot do this." He is the one who heard the order directly from the creator. Yet, he does not object, and then he too eats from the tree.

As Julie Faith Parker pointed out in her article **Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission, and Implications of צמה in Genesis 3:6b, (https://www.jstor.org/stable/42912464)** English versions of the story often leave out the word צמה, which translates to with her, from **Genesis 3:6 (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%203:6&version=NIV)**. So English readers read, "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." However, the Hebrew reads, "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it with her." In the English version, it is as though Eve is giving him the fruit and making him eat it. However, the Hebrew version informs us that Adam was an active participant and ate it with her willingly.

Were this the moment of original sin, Adam would be more to blame than Eve. Adam had a direct order from G-d. Yet, he still chose to disobey and eat with her. He chose to disobey G-d. Eve only chose to disobey Adam.

Choose Knowledge

Finally, Eve used the information the serpent gave her to choose knowledge for the human race. The snake told her she could be wise like G-d and she would not die. Eve had no reason to not believe the snake, as G-d had not told her directly that she would die. In this scenario, the obvious solution would be to choose knowledge.

Curse or Blessing?

In the Christian version of the story, G-d punishes Adam and Eve by cursing Adam to work the land and Eve to bear children. Yet, are our children and the ability to grow our own food curses? In the Jewish version, this is seen as an original blessing, not an original sin. Eve is blessed to become the mother of humanity, and Adam is blessed to be able to grow his own food. Then they are forced to leave the garden. The children have grown up and can care for themselves and have their own

families. It is time for them to move out. This is the natural order of things and not a punishment. In order to believe the Christian version of events, you have to see your children and indeed your very existence as a curse.

Thank You, Eve

In conclusion, Eve did not curse humanity. She started it. Eve gave us life. She ensured that we had the knowledge to care for ourselves and the ability to reproduce. You exist because she ate the fruit, which most likely was not an apple. Your children exist, because she ate the fruit.

Therefore, it is time to stop the demonizing of our mother, and give thanks. Thank You, Eve, mother of humanity, for choosing Knowledge over naivety. Thank you for my life and my children's life. Truly, you are a heroine to all of humanity.

Stay tuned for the continuation of the Women In the Bible Series. Click **here (https://www.patheos.com/blogs/reclaimingthetruth/)** and subscribe to the newsletter to be informed when a new post comes out.

Works Cited:

PARKER, JULIE FAITH. "Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission, and Implications of עמה in Genesis 3:6b." Journal of Biblical Literature, vol. 132, no. 4, 2013, pp. 729–47. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/42912464. Accessed 16 July 2023.

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